

EX-SPY IDENTIFIES RED DOUBLE AGENT

Witness at Trial of Soblen
Names Courier Here

By DAVID ANDERSON

A German who worked with the Office of Strategic Services in 1943 and at the same time served as a Soviet spy ring was identified in court yesterday as Dr. Hans Hirschfeld.

The witness, Dr. Robert Soblen, on a charge of espionage, was told that Dr. Hirschfeld and another German, Dr. Ernst Baerensprung, a Social Democrat, had relayed information to the Russians via Dr. Soblen. Government spokesmen declined to identify Dr. Hirschfeld further.

The witness who gave a name to the double agent who had been mentioned earlier in the trial was Mrs. Johanna Koenen Beker, a former Communist, who has been employed in New York City for nearly twenty years here.

She testified that Dr. Hirschfeld had supplied her in 1943 with periodic reports on other German working for the U. S. S. in New York. The reports covered their special fields of competence and their political leanings—matters of interest to the Russians, Mrs. Beker said. She told of meeting Dr. Hirschfeld in subway stations.

Reports Change

Toward the end of their contact, in 1945, Mrs. Beker said, the nature of Dr. Hirschfeld's information changed. It was a time when the Manhattan Project was testing the first atomic bomb.

"He said that he had gained knowledge that the United States Government was working on some important military program and that this would affect the end of the war considerably," Mrs. Beker testified. Later, she continued, he emphasized "progress in this secret project."

All of this was passed on to Dr. Soblen, Mrs. Beker said. At no time was Mrs. Beker asked to identify Dr. Hirschfeld other than as a Soviet agent scribbled to her by Dr. Soblen. She said that she had first met the agent near Columbus Circle. The same procedure was followed in the case of Dr. Baerensprung.

The witness took the stand before Judge William B. Werlands and a jury of ten men and two women. She testified in a soft, businesslike manner.

Born in Germany

Assistant United States Attorney Richard C. Casey brought out that she had been born in Germany. The family left Germany when Hitler came to power, finally settling in Moscow in 1935. Johanna Koenen worked for several American interests there, among them International Business Machines.

She married a Russian, Harry Wagner, who, she said, had spied on his friends for the N.R.V.D., the secret police. One day he was arrested, she said, "and I never saw him again." In 1937, she said, she was employed on visiting foreigners, American business

men and the United States Embassy staff." Then, in 1939, she was sent to New York.

The top-ranking Soviet agents here, Mikhail Chaltapin and Vassili and Helen Zubilin, made contact with her, Mrs. Beker told the jury. Once in 1942 Mrs. Zubilin supplied sound-proofing material for her apartment and introduced her to Dr. Soblen.

She Points to Soblen

"She said he [Dr. Soblen] was a good friend of hers and that I would be in good hands," Mrs. Beker said. At this point Mr. Casey invited the witness to identify the defendant, Dr. Soblen, closed his eyes when she pointed to him.

Dr. Soblen, who is now 60 years old, has lymphatic leukemia.

Mrs. Beker said Dr. Soblen had paid her \$30 or \$40 monthly for her services as a courier in the spy ring.

Dr. Baerensprung turned over information on German émigré groups in this country, Mrs. Beker said, complete with biographical data culled from the U. S. files. The reports covered anti-Fascist activity here, Mrs. Beker said.

She said she had continued to see Dr. Soblen until 1947 and on at least two occasions he had spoken to her of possible action in the event of discovery.

"He gave me the telephone number of an attorney to use if ever I had trouble with the authorities because of our work that this man could help me," Mrs. Beker said. "Once, when driving through Central Park, he said that if at any time in the future I was asked if I had met him, I was to say he was a

friend of my brother and that we had met accidentally on the street in New York."

"Did Dr. Soblen know your brother?" Mr. Casey asked. "No, he did not," Mrs. Beker replied. This completed her testimony for the Government.

During the morning Jack Soblen, a confessed spy who is a brother of the defendant, left the witness stand after brief examinations. The trial will be resumed at noon today in Federal Court on Foley Square.

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